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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 000089

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NP; UNVIE FOR IAEA

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SUBJECT: IAEA: FRANCE HAS NOT TAKEN A DECISION ON A THIRD TERM FOR IAEA DG ELBARADEI

REF: A) 2004 STATE 270920 B) 2004 BERLIN 4278

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Josiah Rosenblatt, reason 1
.4 b/d

11. (C) In the absence of MFA DAS-equivalent director for disarmament issues Francois Richier, we presented reftel demarche December 21 to the desk officer covering the office during the holidays. On January 5, we met with Richier's deputy, Veronique Vouland-Aneini, who voiced skepticism that IAEA Director General ElBaradei could be prevented from pursuing a third term as DG. She noted that France does not believe that Geneva Group policy on term limits applies (also see ref B). She observed that the issue of a third term for ElBaradei is a political decision, while the Geneva Group's focus is on financial issues. Technically, the IAEA is not a UN agency, which is another reason why the two-term limit does not come into play, she added. On a more practical level, Vouland reminded us that no other candidates had surfaced prior to the December 31st deadline for nominations.

The MFA was therefore unclear how the United States could envision an alternate candidate emerging before the June IAEA meeting or whether we could muster sufficient support to block ElBaradei's own candidacy.

12. (C) Despite these reservations, Vouland stressed that France has not/not yet decided how to handle ElBaradei's request for a third term. While France has not taken a position, it plans to factor in the views of other Europeans, she added. In response to our prodding, she said that the British might object to a third term, but that they likely would not want to maintain that position if other Europeans took the opposite view. When pressed further, she said Spain may have decided to support ElBaradei, but she wasn't certain. Vouland agreed to keep us informed as the French position is finalized.
Leach